

**REMOVAL OF THE INDIANS WESTWARD.**

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**LETTER**

FROM

**THE SECRETARY OF WAR,**

TRANSMITTING,

In obedience to a Resolution of the House of Representatives, of the 20th Dec. last, in-  
formation in relation to the

**DISPOSITION OF THE SEVERAL TRIBES OF INDIANS,**

TO

**EMIGRATE WEST OF THE MISSISSIPPI.**

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**JANUARY 3, 1827.**

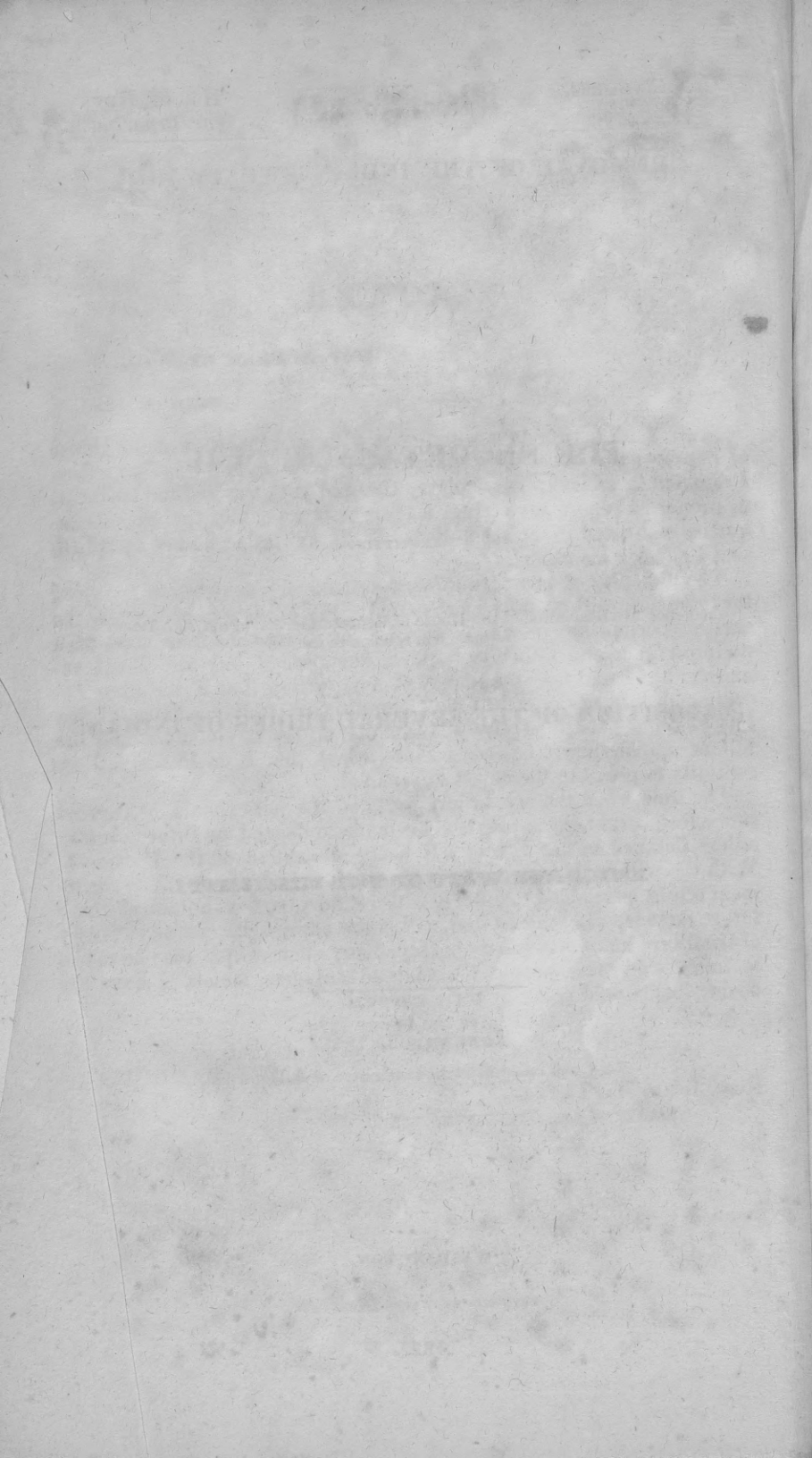
Read, and referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

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**WASHINGTON :**

PRINTED BY GALES & SEATON.

1827.



## DEPARTMENT OF WAR,

*January 2, 1827.*

SIR : With a view to a compliance with the resolution of the House of Representatives, of the 20th ultimo, in relation to the Indian tribes, I directed the Clerk, particularly charged with the Indian business, to prepare a report answering, as far as practicable, the various inquiries embraced in the resolution. With that order he has complied, and I enclose his report.

The difficulty of presenting more satisfactory answers to many of the inquiries, will be duly appreciated. My anxiety to present, at the earliest period, the information called for, leaves me less time, than its importance and difficulty require, to superadd any additional remarks ; but I will take the liberty of suggesting, that if the plan recommended in my report to the Committee on Indian Affairs, at the last Session, should receive the sanction of the Legislature, and the bill accompanying it be enacted into a law, that it could not fail essentially to promote the object of removal.

The time when the act, or any parts of the act, should be carried into effect, might, by a proviso, be made to depend on future events, either detailed in the act, or left to the discretion of the President. With the will of the nation thus expressed, the agents of the Government might be enabled to assure, with confidence, the Indians of their future fortune. So long as that will is not expressed, the uncertainty of the future must necessarily paralyze any effort which may be made to impress on these people the vast advantages, which, I have no doubt, they would enjoy by their removal.

I have the honor to be,

Your obedient servant,

JAMES BARBOUR.

Hon. JOHN W. TAYLOR,

*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

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DEPARTMENT OF WAR,  
Office of Indian Affairs, 27th Dec. 1826.

To the Hon. JAMES BARBOUR,  
Secretary of War :

SIR : I have the honor, in compliance with your directions, to make to you the following report on the several points embraced in the resolution of the House of Representatives, of the 20th inst. relating to "the disposition of the several tribes of Indians within the United States to emigrate West of the Mississippi," &c.

Of the disposition of those tribes to emigrate, no *certain* information can be given. It is true, of the four principal tribes, two of them, the Choctaws and Chickasaws, have recently, and to the Commissioners appointed to negotiate with them in reference to this subject, given a decided negative ; and from the other two, the Creeks and Cherokees, we have the most decided indications of a like determination. But these answers have been given under the same mode of application, and which it is respectfully suggested is not only the most exceptionable in their view of the subject, but will continue to be, as it has been in regard to those tribes, unsuccessful. I mean *the mode of treating with them*.

The exceptions on the part of those Indians to this mode, arise out of preconceived prejudices, and out of the circumstance of making the proposition direct to the enlightened among them, who, if they happen not to be chiefs, have an influence over those who are, which they exert, and which has been, and in my opinion will continue to be, effectual, in defeating such propositions made in this form for the future. Those prejudices, it must be conceded, are natural. They arise out of a review of the past. Those enlightened half-breeds, from whom the opposition to emigration generally comes, read in the history of the past the effects of this mode of acquiring lands. They see the entire country of the East has been swept of their brethren who once inhabited there ; and that, as the chiefs in the Middle and Northern States have listened to proposals to treat with them, they also have disappeared, until only a remnant of their once mighty race is left. They moreover enjoy the preciousness of domestic life ; and in the absence of game, have, to a very great extent, at least, turned their attention to the soil, and to manufacturing. They dread a rupture of those ties ; and, from the moment a proposition is made in the Congress to appropriate the means to treat with either of those tribes, those intelligent and lettered Indians exert an influence over the head men, and over as many of the body of their people as they can reach, which has resulted, as we have seen, in their refusal to acquiesce in the terms proposed to them. "The obstacles to their removal" are, in my opinion, in great part those which arise out of *the mode* of approaching them.



In support of this opinion, I beg leave respectfully to add an extract from a letter addressed to the Department by the Hon. John McKee, of the 13th of September last—a period, it will be remarked, but little anterior to that in which the Commissioners met the Choctaws in council.

“I have recently,” writes this correspondent, “been in the Choctaw nation, and at a council of the chiefs, where the subject of their migration to the West, and of the *approaching treaty*, was much spoken of. Considerable opposition to *both* was publicly expressed: though I found some of the old and best informed were of opinion, that they could not long subsist where they now are, and that an early march to the West would be most favorable to a judicious selection of a new residence, and the formation of friendly associations with the Indians in that quarter.”

Col. McKee having been once the Agent to the Choctaws, and having enjoyed their confidence in an eminent degree, may be considered as having given a correct view of their dispositions. Their opposition was to *both*—to the treaty, as well as to a removal. To their dislike of the former may be attributed, in great part, their objection to the latter.

“The methods best calculated to overcome this obstacle,” and which I esteem to be, in regard to the great body of at least three of the tribes enumerated, the only one of consequence, would be to assemble at some suitable and central place, the enlightened and influential half-breeds of those tribes, for the purpose of explaining to them, by persons to be appointed for that object, and who should carry with them, not only the full instructions of the Government, and its *pledges*, but also, an influence arising out of their known friendship to the Indians, what are the *real views* of the Government in relation to them, and especially those which have been indicated in the plans that have been proposed for their location on lands West of the Mississippi. It is not my opinion that all those who might assemble at such a council would return from it with sentiments and purposes favorable to a removal *themselves*, but I do believe the most of them would perceive that, if their *own* interests would be promoted by remaining on the lands they now occupy, and suitable and liberal portions of them should be given to them individually, the interests of the great body of their people would be promoted by emigration. The effect of such convictions would disembarass the question of removal of its chief difficulty, when the simultaneous appointment of suitable persons to go among the Indians, to advise them, men of character and fidelity, and who should be known to the Indians as such, and suitable provisions in presents being made, in rifles, kettles, blankets, and the establishment of depots at suitable points, and of ferries; in a word, all the facilities of transportation established, the obstacles which are now in the way of emigration, in so far as it regards the great body of the Indians, might be considered as being removed.

There will remain one other obstacle to be removed, and which I will remark upon when I come to the quere in the resolution which is connected with it.

“The Teachers of Schools now in operation among the Indians,” are, it is believed, with but one exception,\* favorable to the removal of the Indians; and it is believed that the previous arrangements which it is essential to adopt, and to some of which I have referred, and to the remainder reference will be made in the proper place, these teachers, who have, and so deservedly, the confidence of the Indians, would exercise the most efficient agency in carrying the plan of removal into effect.

It is proper to state, that when the general removal of the Indians was first discussed as a measure of policy and humanity, some of those who had made large investments in buildings, and in other branches of the necessary provision for schools, apprehended not only a probable loss of those investments, but that the Indians would be so circumstanced in their new home, as to put it out of their power to follow them, with any prospect of success, in their benevolent aim to enlighten and instruct them, and to introduce them into the benefits and blessings of the civilized and Christian state. But when these objections were answered in the further development of the plan for the collocation of the Indians, and these humane teachers were informed that their labors would be required under it; and that the money they had laid out where they now are, would doubtless be reimbursed in the erection, by the Government, of schools West of the Mississippi, upon suitable plans, they were satisfied with the measure; and, in one instance, a proposition has been made by a teacher to go and explore the country, and open the way for the removal of the Indians who are particularly within his charge. There are “reasons, therefore, to authorize the belief that the teachers will co-operate in the measure,” should “an appropriation be made to defray the expense of such removal and settlement.”

Some estimate may be formed of “the progress which has been made in civilization,” from the fact that, within the last eight years, when there were not, it is believed, in the United States or Territories, *fifty* Indian children deriving instruction of any sort, there are now upwards of *twelve hundred* enjoying the benefits of a system of education, which combines, with the customary methods of teaching, a knowledge of farming and the mechanic arts, and the various branches of domestic economy, in weaving, spinning, knitting, &c. But the best illustration of the state of improvement may be had by a reference to the volume of Indian Treaties, pages 479, 480, 481, and part of 482. The paper referred to contains a detailed account of the employments, improvements, and population, and laws of the Cherokees—the most improved of the four Southern tribes.

“In the plains and valleys,” says the writer, who is himself a native, “the soil is generally rich, producing Indian corn, cotton, tobacco, wheat, oats, Indigo, sweet and Irish potatoes. The natives carry on considerable trade with the adjoining States, and some of them export cotton in boats down the Tennessee to the Mississippi, and down that River to New Orleans. Apples and peach orchards

\* Mr. Findley, of Ohio.

are quite common, and gardens are cultivated, and much attention is paid to them. Butter and cheese are seen on Cherokee tables. There are many public roads in the nation, and houses of entertainment are kept by natives. Numerous and flourishing villages are seen in every section of the country. Cotton and woollen cloths are manufactured here. Blankets, of various dimensions, are manufactured by Cherokee hands. Almost every family in the nation grows cotton for its own consumption. Industry and commercial enterprise are extending themselves in every part. Nearly all the merchants in the nation are native Cherokees. Agricultural pursuits (the most solid foundation of our national prosperity,) *engage the chief attention of the People,*" &c. &c. The population is about 14,000.

Of the other three tribes, the Creeks, Choctaws, and Chickasaws, it may be said, they are following in the steps of the Cherokees; but are not so far advanced. The precise state of advancement of which, and of other tribes, is not known, but all of them, where the game has grown scarce, are more or less cultivators of the ground.

Of the tribes that have "manifested a disposition to emigrate," may be named the Cherokees and Choctaws, in part; the Shawneese, and, in part, the Creeks.

Of the Cherokees, there have gone over from Tennessee and Georgia, and now occupy lands in Arkansas, some six thousand; and part of the Choctaws are also there, and upon lands (as are the Cherokees,) which have been ceded to them by treaty. Of the Choctaws, Colonel McKee writes, in his letter of the 13th of September last: "Many of the Indians (Choctaws) are disposed to emigrate, but are ignorant of the route, or the means by which they can reach the contemplated settlement, that they are deterred from making an effort; but, with an active, intelligent conductor, who could inform them where and how they could obtain such aids as the Government will furnish them on the route, *many* would, in my opinion, soon set out for a country so much better adapted to their wants and habits, than where they now are."

I know no way of reconciling the late decided rejection of the proposals made by the Commissioners to the Choctaws, with these statements of Colonel McKee, except upon the grounds assumed, viz: their settled antipathy to the *mode* of negotiating with them. That Colonel McKee is correct in his report of the dispositions of the Choctaws, there can be no doubt, as every year, even with the uncertainty of the ways and means to subsist upon, adds more or less to the number of those who have settled in Arkansas. It is reasonable to suppose that, with the facilities of removal, and the inducements which have been suggested, the number would be greatly augmented.

The Shawnees are *pressing* to the West. The Agent, falling in with what he esteems to be the policy of the Government, has, to provide the emigrants with the necessary outfits, there being no specific provision for such expenditures, actually incurred a personal responsibility to the amount of some four thousand dollars. How far it may be proper for the Agents to encourage emigration will depend on the



provision which the Congress may make to defray the cost of it. Should it be decided proper to withhold the means, there will remain no alternative but to inform the Agents that there are no means applicable to the object, except the very limited amount which has generally been furnished towards it, from the contingent fund.

Of the Creeks, the last accounts received from the Agent state, that upwards of eight hundred had enrolled for emigration. For the cost of their removal, provision has been made by the Congress.

I have confined my remarks chiefly to the four Southern tribes. They are those to whom, as to policy, the greater portion of the remaining tribes in our States and Territories look; and, whatever measures the body of those tribes may adopt, it is believed would be followed by the others. The whole number of Indians in the several States and Territories, exclusive of that portion of the Michigan Territory which lies West of Lake Michigan, and North of the State of Illinois, is about 97,000. Of this number, about 53,000 reside in North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi: these are Cherokees, Creeks, Choctaws, and Chickasaws. Any movement of these that should indicate that a portion of those tribes, even if that should not exceed one half, it is believed would operate upon the 3000 Wyandots, Shawnees, Senecas, Delawares, Kaskaskias, Miami, and Eel Rivers, who reside in Ohio, and the 5000 Seminoles, and fragments of other tribes, in Florida.

But such a movement in these four principal tribes is not esteemed to be indispensable to the removal of the rest, if the proper measures are adopted to secure it, and these are in addition to what has been suggested, and this will have a direct bearing, also, on the four great tribes, the selection and location of a suitable country, and which I esteem to be no less necessary as a *first step*, to secure the object of removal, than a just and humane one to those Indians who are now emigrating. They go, they know not whither. Their object is a greater range of country and subsistence. They follow, as well as they are able, in the tracks of others who have preceded them; and, crossing the Mississippi, get involved in difficulties with the stronger bands, or settle upon, or roam over lands from which, in a short time afterwards, they will be, as some have been, compelled *again* to remove.

Those tribes who are "unwilling" to emigrate, so far as these are known to the Government, and, judging of their dispositions from the result of the negotiations which have been attempted, are the Creeks, in part, the Cherokees, in part, the Choctaws and Chickasaws, in part, and, indeed, nearly all the tribes, *as such*, in Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi, and Ohio; although a gradual emigration is making from all of them. But this expressed "unwillingness," as has been stated, is believed to be the result, more of hostility to the mode of ascertaining their dispositions, than to any fixed purpose, on their part, not to emigrate. The greatest exception to removal, it is believed, applies to the Cherokees; and, of this tribe, a larger portion, under *any* arrangements that may be

adopted for their removal, will remain, than of all the other tribes together : and for the reason that they are more enlightened, and have more comforts, and are more prosperous, than are any others. And just in proportion as these advances may be made by the other tribes, will be the difficulties of obtaining their consent to remove. One of the principal inducements that could be offered to the Cherokees, in addition to that of compensation for their land, would be that arising out of a disposition to impart to their brethren, in their new homes, the benefits of the civilized state ; and to enjoy, under the form of Government which it has been proposed to adopt for them, some of its rewards and honors.

“The objections” to removal are, first, those which arise out of attachment to their soil, and its improvements ; and the uncertainty as to the nature of the country to which they are invited to emigrate. Could this be examined, and should it prove suitable, and should it be so esteemed by a deputation of their own People, (and they should be permitted to judge and report for themselves,) it is not unreasonable to believe, pressed, as they are, on all sides, and feeling, as they advance in improvement, the galling effects of the division which separates them from the emoluments and honors of the civilized state, that they would gladly escape from such a condition to one more free and independent.

The Indians are not “acquainted” with either “the nature or situation of the country, to which it is proposed to remove them.”

The “particular district of country” which has been looked to, for the permanent home of the Indians, who should emigrate West of the Mississippi, is that which lies North of the river Arkansas, and West of the State of Missouri ; but, as no examination of it has been made, with a view to its occupancy by the tribes now in the States East of the Mississippi, it cannot be known “what particular district or districts of country West of the Mississippi they ought to occupy.”

It is not known how far the Indians are “willing to abandon the chase, and depend for their subsistence upon the pursuits of agriculture, and the arts of civilized life ;” but, it is presumed, that, under the form of Government, which it has been proposed to establish for them, that some would pursue the game, should the country possess it, and others agriculture ; and that their dependence upon the latter would supersede their reliance on the former, in proportion as they might become enlightened, and made to feel, by an interest in the soil, and the right of property, the superior benefits which a cultivation of the soil confers over those which are to be derived from the mere hunter state. And in regard to their present views on this subject, they would emigrate, should they emigrate at all, carrying with them, and in the same proportions, the habits which they now indulge in their present locations ; and which may be estimated, as two to five, the larger number even yet depending and preferring to depend upon the precarious subsistence which they derive from hunting. It is also true, that this proportion applies to the older, and, in general uninstructed, Indians. And, however the greater facilities of taking game might operate to

draw some aside from the cultivation of the soil, their places would be filled, and the ratio assumed diminished, by the force of education, which is now felt by so many hundreds of the rising generation, and by an interest in the soil, and the influence of a Government suited to their state of improvement.

It is believed the Indians have not been made clearly to understand the nature and form of Government proposed to be instituted over them. It is believed, also, that just in proportion as they shall be made to comprehend it, will their objections to it be lessened. I derive this belief, in part, from my own intercourse with some of these People. I found, in the few with whom I conversed on this subject, the most decided objections to the plan, which, however, on its being fully explained, were given up, with the acknowledgment that it had not been understood by them.

For like reasons, it is not known "whether the chiefs, head men, and people, of the tribes, are willing to dissolve their existing political relations; or whether they are willing the United States should create a government over, and make laws for, them; or whether they are willing to change the tenure of their lands, and hold them in severalty, or whether the tribes West of the Mississippi are willing the Indians in the States and Territories should be concentrated in their country." These are points of information that can be had only on a satisfactory account being given of the soil and salubrity of the country, to which they may be invited to go; and this cannot be known, until it shall be examined; nor until a form of government be established, and clearly and fully explained, and submitted to them. It is believed, however, that, these two preliminaries being attended to, there is enough of the love of property in the most of the Indians in the States, to induce them to prefer a government suited to their condition, as to the simple elements of which it would be composed, and to hold lands in severalty, in preference to the present, and as many of them believe, very uncertain tenure by which they hold them at all.

The dispositions of the tribes West of the Mississippi, so far as this has been ascertained, is favorable to receive their brethren on this side. A deputation came over in 1825, to invite the Ohio Indians to go and join them, and it is doubtless in consequence of that union of feeling which these People cherish, and which distance it appears cannot separate, that the Shawnees are now going over.

"The intentions and objects of the Government," have not been made known except in a general way, to any of the tribes, although the intelligent among them appear in some instances to understand them, so far at least as these relate to removal. No expression of a "willingness to come into the measures has been made," because perhaps no measures have been taken in regard to this particular question which could lead to an answer either way.

Whether "the Indians now in the States and Territories will upon removal be able to provide for themselves the means of subsistence without the aid of the Government, cannot be known until the quality of the soil to which they may be transferred is known, or how far they

may be induced to seek a subsistence out of it. It is highly probable, however, that aid will be required to be extended to them by the Government, but to what extent it is not possible to know until their numbers shall be ascertained, as well as their dispositions for agricultural pursuits, and the quality of the soil upon which they may settle.

Assuming however that the country is examined, and shall turn out to be well suited to the condition, and abundant in resources to supply the wants of the emigrants ; and that an extinction of the Osage and Kansas titles may be necessary to secure a suitable country, and this has been in part accomplished, it is believed that ten thousand dollars may be required to purchase the right to the country, for the purposes contemplated, and to cover the expenses attending the negotiation. To this may be added the cost of removing the Piankeshaws, Weas, Shawnees, Kickapoos and Delawares ; also, the Wyandotts, Senecas, Miamies, and Eel Rivers, and the Kaskaskias, which may be estimated at twenty dollars for each Indian ; suppose that each one receives a rifle and blanket, and kettle, and some powder and lead, and in addition an average cost of supplies from the depots, of ten dollars more, making thirty dollars a head, will make, there being about 2500 Indians of those tribes, \$75,000. Upon the supposition that the entire body of Indians in the States and Territories consent to emigrate, there being of these about 97,000, the cost may be estimated for *removing them*, at \$ 30 a head, which, including the tribes above named, will amount to \$291,000.

It is not possible to estimate with any certainty the price which they would require for these lands, of which they own nearly 77,000,000 of acres, but it is believed that the proceeds of these lands will not only cover all the cost of providing a new country for them, and transporting them to it, but supply all their wants in the incipient periods of their settlement, and also all the implements of agriculture, and the preliminary expenses attending a division of lands, and providing stock, and leave a surplus afterwards for the support of the kind of Government which it may be esteemed best to adopt and place them under, and as long as that Government may require to be assisted by that of the Union.

The present "annual expense" to the Government in educating upwards of 1200 children, is \$10,000. It is presumed an additional sum of \$ 10,000 more would sustain the system under the proposed plan of removal.

"The annual expense of the Government proposed to be instituted over them," it is difficult to estimate, but it may be assumed at nearly the same which it costs the United States to support the Government of the Territories, of Michigan for example, which is something short of ten thousand dollars.

It is believed that a proper attention to the location of congenial tribes may not only avert the calamities of war to which these People are liable, but strengthen and perpetuate the peace under the auspices of which they would doubtless assemble. One of the chief causes of war among them will have been removed by the fixing of limits and



settlement of boundaries ; and by the change in their habits which a cultivation of the soil, a multiplication of schools, and a consequent increase of intelligence, will not fail to produce.

It is believed that a hundred United States' Troops, seconded as it is presumed they would be by corps of educated young men, would be sufficient to maintain the peace, and ensure the execution of the laws, and protect the colony from any outrage, from without ; and that, in a few years, as the emigrants should become still more enlightened, and the term of a generation only *need* be required to civilize them all, no aid will be required from the military of the United States, any more than is now required to keep the peace between the Choc-taws and Chickasaws. They would soon become one People, and combine as such for the general safety. What the cost of a hundred United States' Troops would be, I have no certain means of ascertaining ; nor for how many years their services would be required.

To commence this work of removal, I would respectfully suggest that for the first year thirty thousand dollars would be sufficient, exclusive of the cost of assembling the council of educated and influential chiefs, and for the pay of agents who might be appointed to go among the Indians, to explain to them the views and objects of the Government ; and to point out the ways that might be opened, and to name the depots and the crossing places, and for others to accompany them.

But I am of opinion that the first step, and without which it would be fruitless to attempt a removal, is to ascertain, by actual examination, whether a suitable country can be had ; and if so, where located, and within what limits, and which should be clearly defined in all that relates to its extent and fitness for a last home for the most unfortunate of human beings. And have they not a right to expect of the Government of the United States, that they will not be asked to abandon the homes they now occupy without the certainty of having others provided for them ?

All which is respectfully submitted.

THO. L. MCKENNEY.



